KUMARI NIRMALA DESHPANDE: Sir, to stop migration to cities, a multi-pronged strategy is needed. So, what role the panchayats are going to play in stopping migration from the rural to the urban areas?

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: Sir, I don't think the experience of other countries or our own would indicate that we can ever stop such migrations, but we can moderate it. To moderate it, what is necessary is to buckle the rural hinterland with the urban manufacturing centre, and, that is precisely the objective of the Rural Business Hubs. We have had a measure of success so far, but as these MoUs are at an early stage of implementation, I think an independent evaluation would have to be undertaken after a certain amount of time to see as to what extent we have been able to at least moderate the huge migration that is taking place from the rural India to the metropolitan centres. Perhaps, it would not matter so much if the migrations were from the rural hinterland to the immediately near urban centres.

FDI in cruise shipping space

*606. SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE:†
SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:

Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the draft policy, prepared by a steering group headed by the Shipping and Tourism Ministers has been considered by the Committee of Secretaries for approval of the Central Government;

(b) if so, whether the policy seeks to encourage foreign direct investment in cruise shipping space;

(c) if so, the other main aims of the policy;

(d) whether Government have approved the same; and

(e) by what time it is likely to be announced?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) No, Sir.

(b) 100% FDI is already permitted in the shipping sector.

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shrimati Supriya Sule.

(c) The objectives of the proposed cruise shipping policy include making India a major cruise destination by popularizing cruise shipping, facilitating creation of requisite infrastructure and creating a conducive environment.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) The details are being worked out to finalise the cruise shipping policy. However, no time frame can be given.

SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE: Sir, in reply to part (c) of the question, the hon. Minister has mentioned that he is facilitating creation of requisite infrastructure. What initiatives have been taken to improve the infrastructure at various ports, especially, regarding the road connectivity as well as rail connectivity? As tourism provides a lot of employment avenues to all the youths of our country, how soon are you going to do it? Because in your reply you have mentioned that you have worked out the finalisation of the cruise policy, but there is no time frame; so, why is there a delay? If there is a delay, by when will it be done?

SHRI T.R. BAALU: Sir, the successive Governments had not concentrated heavily on the particular cruise shipping industry. After the UPA Government took over, a Steering Committee was established with the Minister as its Chairman and the Minister of Tourism as Co-Chairperson. The Steering Committee has met twice and it has almost arrived at a draft policy. When the draft policy was reviewed, there were some shortcomings for which we wanted to introduce river cruising also. In river cruising there was an element of environmental issues. So, this particular policy will have to be revised. As and when these things are discussed in the Steering Committee, definitely, the policy will be improved adequately. At the same time, Madam has asked what are the facilities made available at various ports. Sir, as far as Chennai Port is concerned, a state-of-art Cruise-cum-passenger terminal has been created. The available/proposed facilities at Terminal include money-changer, food court, communication centre, VIP lounge, etc. Two duty-free shops are functioning on rental basis. As far as Cochin Port is concerned, clean berths are offered for handling cruise vessels. A tourist information centre, prepaid auto rickshaw counter has also been provided. As far as Mumbai Port is concerned, I would say that Mumbai Port Trust has upgraded and refurbished its existing cruise terminal. The facilities for baggage inspection, rest rooms, toilet, space for duty-free shops, etc., have been provided in the passenger terminal at

BPX berth of Indira Dock. With regard to Mormugao Port, I would say that a passenger terminal has been developed at berth No. 10 for the cruise passengers. The Port has provided a duty-free shop. As far as New Mangalore Port is concerned, adequate facilities are being provided to the cruise vessles on temporary basis. With regard to Vizag port, ...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Have you got the written answer? ....*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE: Sir, I am sorry. My questions is specifically about the road connectivity and the rail connectivity, not about the duty-free shops...*(Interruptions)*....

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let her put a supplementary.

SHRI T.R. BAALU: Sir, as far as road connectivity is concerned, in all 12 major ports, we are concentrating on port connectivity. However, the hon. Member is asking about the road connectivity. But the question pertains to the cruise shipping. We are connecting all the ports.

SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE: Sir, my second supplementary is, does the Government have any special landing for cruise liners, especially, in Andaman and Nicobar or Lakshadweep islands and our long East and West coasts as a lot of youth can be encouraged for employment as all these areas don't have that much employment? So, should tourism be tapped and will your Department take any initiatives to provide this?

SHRI T.R. BAALU: Sir, I will pass on this question to the concerned Minister.

DR. M.S. GILL: Sir, would the Hon. Minister consider cruise ships as a powerful means of removal of poverty and would he tie up with the Minister for Panchayats to have Indians below the poverty line perpetually cruising from Oslo to Hong Kong?

SHRI T.R. BAALU: Sir, it is a matter of suggestion. I will look into it.

DR. K. MALAISAMY: Sir, without knowing the report of the Steering Committee, we assume that India has got a tremendous potentiality in the area of shipping cruise. What I am trying to ask is, by virtue of their policy and programme, will there be a policy initiative to see how much potentiality can be exploited? If so, within what time-frame?

SHRI T.R. BAALU: Sir, under the policy of the Government of India, we

are going to propose ten lakh passenger landing in a particular year. Last year, it was 2.4 lakh passenger landing. But it is all at the infant stage. However, the suggestion made by the hon. Member will be definitely taken into consideration.

*607. [*The questioners (Shri Rahul Bajaj and Shri Raj Kumar Dhoot) were absent. For answer vide page 47.*]

Women deserted by NRI husbands

*608. SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any action has been taken by Government to redress the plight of Indian women deserted by their NRI husbands;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b) The Ministry has recently initiated various measures to create awareness on this issue. An awareness/publicity campaign to make people aware of such issues has been launched by way of publication of guidance booklet, distribution of multi-lingual pamphlets, seminars and scrolls on TV etc. Two workshops, one each at Chandigarh and Thiruvananthapuram, have been held in collaboration with the National Commission for Women to inform the public about the precautions to be taken and the issues involved in marriages with NRI men. A National Consultation on NRI marriages was also organized in Delhi by the Ministry involving State Governments, representatives from police, embassies, NGOs and the judiciary etc. to sensitize the public on the issue. The Ministry has also introduced a scheme to provide legal/counseling services to Indian women deserted by their overseas Indian spouses through Indian Missions abroad. This scheme covers cases pertaining to the USA, the UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the Gulf. The Ministry has also set up a Gender Advisory Group to look into the issues concerning women married to NRI